

Chairing a Department: If You Can't Laugh, You're Done

Nina F. Schor, MD, PhD

Being a Chair is a half-time job.



(Unfortunately,
it's every other minute.)

Why Be a Leader?

- I have programmatic ideas and want to implement them.
- I am a “big picture”, rather than a “detail”, person.
- I want most to mentor and motivate people at progressively higher levels.
- I want to influence and impact things across a broader spectrum than I myself could directly do.

Guiding Principles

- Listen well and read between the lines.
- Learn from everyone and everything.
- Value all components and contributions.
- Thought without action is useless.
- Action without thought is worse.
- Development is forever.
- If you look and the mirror and can't laugh at the person who looks back at you, the ballgame is over.

Listen well and read between the lines.

- Context
- Secondary agenda
- Body and voice language

Learn from everyone and everything.

- Pay attention.
- Every person you meet is a mentor.
- Every experience you have is a lesson.

Learn from Bad Examples, Too. An Early Mentor

“Here is my hypothesis.”

“We have designed a study to test my hypothesis.”

“You have done the study.”

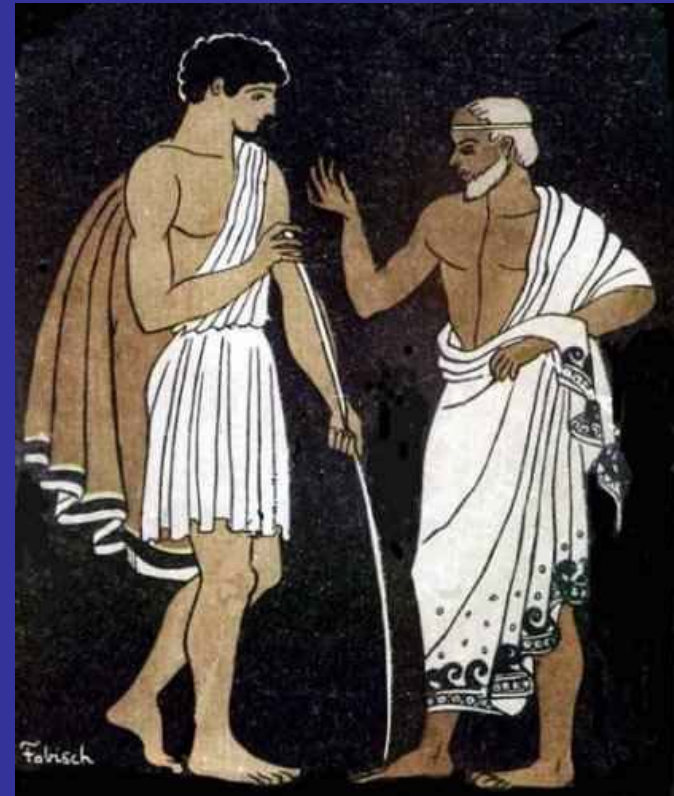
“The results are not consistent with my hypothesis.”

“You must have done something wrong.”

“Do the study again.”

“The results are still not consistent with my hypothesis”

“How could you have made the same mistake twice?”



You Made How Much Lemonade?

One Negative Result; Five Papers

Schor NFT. Adjunctive use of Ethiofos (WR2721) with free radical-generating chemotherapeutic agents in mice: New caveats for therapy. *Cancer Research* 47:5411-5414, 1987.

Schor NF. Depletion of glutathione by the radioprotective agent, S-2-(3-aminopropylamino) ethyl phosphorothioic acid (WR2721). *Biochem Pharm* 37:562-563, 1988.

Schor NF. Mechanisms of synergistic toxicity of the radioprotective agent, WR2721, and 6-hydroxydopamine. *Biochem Pharm* 37:1751-1762, 1988.

Schor NF, Siuda JF, Lomis TJ, Cheng, B. Structural studies on the inactivation of γ -glutamylcysteine synthetase by the disulfide analogues of radioprotective cysteamine derivatives: Effects of aminoalkyl- and hydroxyalkyl- chain length and β,β -bis-dimethylation. *Biochem J* 267:291-296, 1990.

Schor, NF, Cheng, B, Siuda, JF. Inactivation of γ -glutamylcysteine synthetase by SAPH-3 disulfide: The role of the histaminyl moiety. *J Pharm Sci* 80:311-312, 1991.

Value all components and contributions.

- Renaissance whole greater than the sum of its parts
- Make your vision and priorities visible and consistent.
- Make your expectations and job descriptions for individuals fit their goals, aspirations, skill set and talents.

Thought without action is useless.

- Getting a grant is great.
(But it's just a beginning.)
- Authoring a white paper sets the stage.
(But it's not a play.)
- Being a thinker is necessary.
(But not sufficient.)

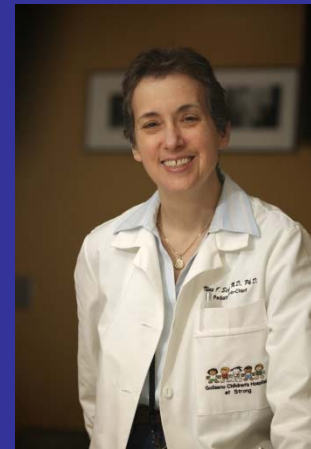
Action without thought is worse.

- Consistency
- Predictability
- Principle-based leadership
- Strategic vision-based goals and objectives

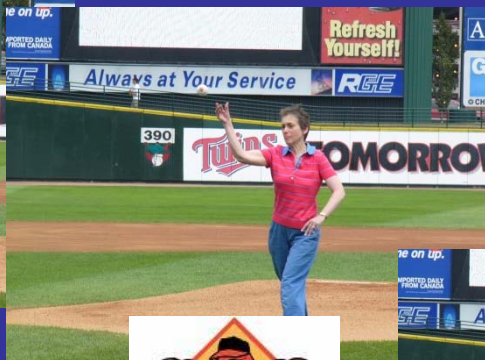
Development is forever.



(Just because you abruptly go from seeing a pediatrician to seeing an internist doesn't mean life is a step function.)



If you look and the mirror and can't laugh at the person who looks back at you, the ballgame is over.
(Laugh. A lot.)



Proceeds Benefit
The PICU at
Golisano
Childrens
Hospital
At Strong



CLICK HERE to go to:



GOLISANO
CHILDREN'S
HOSPITAL
AT STRONG
UNIVERSITY OF ROCHESTER MEDICAL CENTER

The PRISMS



The Small Stuff You Are Forced to Sweat

- Budgets
- Internal rivalries and politics
- Being at the table for your constituency (meetings, meetings, and more meetings)
- Recruitment and retention
- Unproductive faculty, trainees, staff
- Counterproductive faculty, trainees, staff
- Outmoded but historically beloved meetings, procedures, priorities, faculty, staff (dealing with sentimental value)
- Patient, family, community complaints and concerns
- Facilities
- Fundraising
- Media interactions

Sweat is not blood.

- Separate wheat from chaff.
- Surround yourself with people whom you trust whose skill sets complement yours.
- Make sure the responses to the small stuff are driven by the big stuff.
- Be a straight shooter and take and investigate all criticisms seriously.
- Help others come to your conclusion on their own and credit them with their wisdom.
- Dirty laundry cannot be aired outside.

Be a leader.

- Set the vision and tone.
- Educate and empower others.
- Tell their stories to the world.
- Give credit where credit is due.
- Set the bar high for a standing ovation.
- Set the bar low for respect and encouragement.